

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application in light of the present amendment and remarks is respectfully requested. In the present response, claims 1, 3-7, and 9-12 have been canceled, and claims 2, 8, 13, and 14 have been amended. Claims 2, 8, and 13-20 remain pending in this application.

Formal matters

The specification has been objected to because of a typographical error (i.e., “contract” should have been --contrast--) at page 5, line 6. In response, Applicant has submitted an appropriate replacement paragraph that corrects this error.

Substantive matters

Claims 1, 4, 6, and 9-10 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Eckert (U.S. Patent Publication 2004/0085032). These rejections are moot in view of Applicant’s cancellation of those claims.

Claims 3, 7, and 12 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Eckert in view of He (U.S. Patent 6,043,997). These rejections are moot in view of Applicant’s cancellation of those claims.

Claims 5 and 11 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Eckert. These rejections are moot in view of Applicant’s cancellation of those claims.

Claims 2, 8, and 13-16 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but have been indicated as allowable with certain provisos. Examiner has indicated that claims 2, 8, and 13-16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, in the present response:

- (i) Claim 2 has been recast in independent form to include all limitations of base claim 1;
- (ii) Claim 8 has been recast in independent form to include all limitations of its base claim 1 and intervening claim 7;
- (iii) Claim 13 has been recast in independent form to include all limitations of its base claim 10 and intervening claim 12; and
- (iv) Claim 14 has been recast in independent form to include all limitations of its base claim 10.

Thus, as currently amended, claims 2, 8, 13, and 14 are now in a condition for allowance. Because claims 15 and 16 are dependent (either directly or indirectly) on amended claim 14, those claims are also now in a condition for allowance.

Applicant acknowledges the allowance of claims 17-20.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, passing of this case is now in order. Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's agent by telephone if such communication may be helpful in the further examination of this case. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to:

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On January 6, 2005
(Date of Deposit)

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Respectfully submitted,

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